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SUBJECT: SOUTH KORDOFAN'S ICC-INDICTED GOVERNOR PURSUES DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

REF: KHARTOUM 944

¶11. (SBU) Summary. On September 27 and 28, South Kordofan's ICC-indicted Governor, Ahmed Mohamed Haroun (NCP) and his SPLM deputy Abdel Aziz Al Helou, hosted a meeting in Kadugli for donors and UN partners. Subjects discussed included recent progress in South Kordofan, his government's near-term peace and development objectives, and how attendees can contribute toward these achieving these objective. Whatever the motive behind Haroun's proactive leadership and development initiatives, his connections to Khartoum and ability to rally donor support should bring some peace dividends to South Kordofan prior to April, 2010 elections. End Summary

Verbal and Financial Support From Khartoum

¶12. (U) Discussing recent progress, Haroun stated that his government had the support of the Government of National Unity (GNU). He added that the latter had emphasized that South Kordofan's government should not be constrained by conflicts occurring between GNU partners the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). He noted his government had received SDG 150 million from the federal government, which had been allocated for infrastructure projects, particularly roads. Haroun stated that work on a cumulative total of 970 kilometers of roads is underway.

Salary Shortfalls and Government Expansion

¶13. (U) Haroun told the group that the federal government is providing SDG 7.5 million for state salaries, but that there is still a deficit of SDG 4.5 million. He said that this salary deficit was being funded by using the state's oil revenues. (Note: Pursuant to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, at least two percent of oil revenue is allocated to the state or region in which such oil is produced. End Note.) Haroun noted that this situation is not ideal, as South Kordofan's citizens were not seeing the hoped-for benefits from oil production. However, Haroun said, the state was working on reforming the civil service to reduce its size without compromising its ability to provide needed services. Haroun said that he hoped to end the use of oil resources for salaries by the end of the year.

¶14. (U) Haroun discussed the creation of four state capitals, namely Kadugli, Al Fula, Kauda and Abu Jubeiha, and the increase of localities from nine to nineteen, which he said would increase security and the effectiveness of services by putting the government closer to the people. Haroun explained that this expansion will not necessarily compromise his government's efforts to reduce the state's budget deficit, as the integration of civil servants from

the NCP and SPLM will provide all the staff needed in the new localities. The only increase in staff will be the number of locality Commissioners. He noted, however, that his government had cut the salaries of all Ministers and Commissioners by half, which will assist in meeting the salary needs of the additional Commissioners.

Expanded Access for UN and NGOs Promised

¶15. (SBU) Repeating their message from the donor meeting with Haroun on August 8 (ref), international donors emphasized that improved access to and within South Kordofan is crucial for donors to provide effective assistance. Haroun initially deflected these concerns, stating that government and security officials become suspicious of international organizations' agendas when the presence of such organizations does not result in sufficient, visible development. However, Haroun did recommit to providing all required access to ensure effective donor aid. He also announced approval for a UN office in Muglad, noting that this new office will face significant challenges due to the high expectations of the community in and around Muglad. (Note: Access to Muglad has been particularly restricted. Muglad is in the heartland of the Misseryia, an Arab nomadic tribe that acted as Khartoum's most effective proxy in the North/South war, but whose members reportedly have become restless and discontented with Khartoum's treatment since the war's end in ¶2005. End Note.) Donors responded positively to this unexpected announcement and expressed their thanks.

¶16. (U) Haroun also announced that his government had established a "Foreign and National Aid Coordination Committee" that would look

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at ways of increasing the number of donor partners in the state. He stated that a key challenge for this committee is to increase local NGO capacity, and suggested that one way of achieving this is for local NGOs to be partnered in their day-to-day work with international NGOs and UN agencies.

Government/UN/NGOs To Coordinate Efforts

¶17. (U) Meeting attendees agreed on the formation of a ten person team, consisting of five members from the government of South Kordofan and five members from the international community, to coordinate development efforts. Those in attendance also agreed that given the limited time available, the team should focus on strengthening existing programs and mechanisms. The team was tasked with submitting a project proposal within a month, at which time the governor and deputy governor will be in Khartoum for follow up meetings.

Peace Dividends Central to Successful Elections

¶18. (U) Haroun said that the highest priority of the 2010 elections should be ensuring peace in the future. Post-civil war peace dividends should provide tangible development, which in turn will facilitate peaceful and successful elections. Haroun noted that while the technical issues of running elections were important, they were currently a lesser government priority.

Returnees's Problems Imaginary

¶19. (U) Addressing problems encountered by returnees attempting to access their land and homes, Haroun stated that these were only "imaginary" or "conceptual" problems. He said that pursuant to traditional customs and habits in Kordofan, people helped each other, including with access to land. He added that a committee was already in place and was looking at the establishment of a land commission, which would deal with land related problems.

¶10. (SBU) Comment: Despite the ICC indictment and his fearsome reputation for brutality during the north-south war, Haroun continues to impress international actors with his successful partnership with his SPLM deputy and his pro-active governance of South Kordofan. Whatever the motive behind his actions, Haroun's connections to Khartoum and ability to rally donor support should bring some tangible peace dividends to South Kordofan prior to elections and popular consultations. End Comment.

ASQUINO